

REMARKS

Claims 1-14, 16-18, 20-28, and 33-42 remain pending in the present application as amended. All claims have been rejected. Independent claims 1, 16, 18, and 26 have been amended. No claims have been added or canceled. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added to the application by the Amendment.

Claim Rejections

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-6, 8-14, 18, 20-22, 24-28, 33-38, and 40 under 35 USC § 103 as being obvious over Sparks II (U.S. Pat. No. 6,352,479) in view of Barnes et al. (U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2005/0181347). Also, the Examiner has rejected claims 16 and 17 under 35 USC § 103 as being obvious over Kume (U.S. Pat. No. 6,203,433) in view of the Sparks II and Barnes references. Additionally, the Examiner has rejected the remaining claims, all of which are dependent, under 35 USC § 103 as being obvious over the Sparks II and Barnes reference in view of various other references. Applicants respectfully traverse the § 103 rejections insofar as they may be applied to the claims as amended. In particular, Applicants respectfully submit that none of the cited references discloses or even suggests determining a play style parameter of a requesting user based on the at least one response, where the determined play style parameter is employed to connect the requesting user to a second online game available over a network that is different from a first online game, as is now recited in all of the independent claims.

As was previously pointed out, the present application is generally directed to online game matchmaking using play style information. Accordingly, if one player / user initiates an online game as a host and other players / users are considering joining the game as guests, a centralized system matches each other player to the initiated online game if the system determines based upon a play style and/or personal attribute that the other player is compatible with the host and can be assigned as a guest of such host.

Independent claim 1 recites a method for matching users over a network in an online gaming environment. Upon a user entering into a first online game available over the network,

at least one response is received from the user by way of the network with regard to at least one query to the user about the first online game experience following completion of the first online game by the user. Based thereon, a play style parameter of a requesting user is determined based on the at least one response. Significantly, the determined play style parameter is for being employed to connect the requesting user to a second online game available over the network, where the second game is different from the first online game.

Thereafter, the requesting user is in fact connected to the second online game based at least in part on the determined play style parameter. For example, and as was previously pointed out, if the play style parameter shows that the user is a serious gamer interested in challenging games, the requesting user is connected to a game with other like-minded serious gamers, and not to a game with casual players. The connecting is also based at least in part on a collaborative filtering method that aids the requesting user in the selection of the second online game based upon evaluations of the second online game made by other users. For example, if other users have evaluated a particular game to be high-spirited, the user is not connected to such particular game if low-key.

Independent claims 16, 18, and 26 all recite subject matter similar to that of claim 1, albeit in varying forms. Claim 16 recites the subject matter as a computer-readable medium, claim 18 as a system, and claim 26 as a method with slightly differing scope.

Once more, the Sparks II reference is utterly silent with regard to and thus fails to disclose a user being questioned about an online gaming experience, as is recited in all of the independent claims of the present application. Thus, the Examiner argues with regard to all of the independent claims that the cited Barnes reference discloses receiving "feedback to at least one query about a first online game experience following completion of the first online game". In particular, the Examiner cites to paragraph 0045 where it is stated that a system periodically queries a user for feedback during or after block performance, session performance, or at other

times during use by the user of an instructional gaming system, so that a curriculum and/or trajectory may be altered depending upon responses received.

The Barnes system is an instructional gaming system operated locally from a console or the like (computer 10 in Fig. 1), and the Barnes reference does not disclose or even suggest that the console is coupled to other consoles of other users by way of an online network, as is required by the independent claims of the present application. Likewise, the Barnes reference discloses only that the computer 10 is employed for purposes of playing a single 'game', which in particular is an instructional game such as for example to promote weight loss of the user or to improve the vocabulary of the user. Thus, the Barnes reference does not disclose or even suggest that first and second differing games are to be played by the user, where the second game is selected upon determining a play style parameter of the first user after the user plays the first game, as is required by the independent claims of the present application.

In particular, the Barnes system does not determine a play style parameter of a requesting user based on the at least one response therefrom where the determined play style parameter is for being employed to connect the requesting user to a second online game available over any such network, as is also required by the independent claims of the present application, as amended. In point of fact, the Barnes system does not employ first or second differing games, let alone first and second differing online games available over a network, in the manner required by the independent claims as amended.

Moreover, and again, both the Sparks II and Barnes references are entirely silent regarding the requesting user being connected to a second online game based at least in part on a collaborative filtering method that aids the requesting user in the selection of the second online game based upon evaluations of the second online game made by other users, as is also now recited in the independent claims of the present application. Thus, such Sparks II and Barnes references both fail to disclose or even suggest this limitation too, and therefore cannot be applied to make obvious such independent claims for this reason too.

Accordingly, and for all of the aforementioned reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of the Sparks II and Barnes references (claims 1, 18, and 26) or the Kume¹, Sparks II, and Barnes references (claim 16) does not disclose or even make obvious the subject matter of independent claims 1, 16, 18, or 26 as amended, or any depending claims depending therefrom, including claims 2-6, 8-14, 17, 20-22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 33-38, and 40. Moreover, inasmuch as such independent claims are unanticipated and have been shown to be non-obvious, then so too must all claims depending therefrom including claims 7, 23, 39, 41, and 42 be unanticipated and non-obvious, at least by their dependencies. As a result, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of all of the § 103 rejections.

In view of the foregoing Amendment and Remarks, Applicants respectfully submit the present application including claims 1-14, 16-18, 20-28, and 33-42 is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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/Joseph F. Oriti/
Joseph F. Oriti
Registration No. 47,835

Woodcock Washburn LLP
Cira Centre
2929 Arch Street, 12th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19104-2891
Telephone: (215) 568-3100
Facsimile: (215) 568-3439

¹ The Kume reference is cited in connection with claim 16 with regard to disclosing a computer-readable medium and matching users in a gaming environment based on a play style parameter, but is otherwise inapposite to determining the play style parameter and employing the collaborative filtering method in the manner recited in claim 16 as amended. Accordingly, the Kume reference also does not disclose or even suggest determining the play style parameter and employing the collaborative filtering method in the manner recited in claims 1, 16, 18, and 26 as amended.